

**Gulf of Mexico Alliance  
Environmental Education Network  
Underserved and Underrepresented Populations Working Group**

**Conference Call 08/16/07**

**Work Group Attendees:**

Lead: Greg Ira, FL Department of Environmental Protection; [greg.ira@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:greg.ira@dep.state.fl.us)  
Facilitator: Lee Yokel, GOMA Environmental Education Coordinator; [lyokel@disl.org](mailto:lyokel@disl.org)  
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Richard Gonzales, Gulf of Mexico Foundation; [richard@gulfmex.org](mailto:richard@gulfmex.org)  
Kris Shipman, Texas Parks and Wildlife; [kris.shipman@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:kris.shipman@tpwd.state.tx.us)  
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**Current Homework**

1. Lee Yokel will generate an initial summary of the responses from the online survey and look for additional support to analyze the survey.
2. A small committee of individuals will take a first look at the survey data. The group includes Richard Gonzales, Greg Ira, and Bryan Fluech.
3. The UUP participants should email Greg Ira with any of their programs which they feel fit the Gulf of Mexico Alliance to establish a baseline for programmatic connections.
3. Kris Shipman will investigate the Children and Nature Network and report at the next call on their potential grant program.

**Acronyms**

GOMA = Gulf of Mexico Alliance

UUP = Underserved and Underrepresented Populations

**General Notes**

**Survey**

It was reported that Becky Boudreaux with NOAA Gulf Coast Services Center had resigned her position. Thus the group was looking for another individual to assist in the analysis of the survey. Lee Yokel also reported that once the survey was launched, technical problems were experienced by participants. This created only a 75% completion rate of the survey by respondents. The group decided to close the survey and move forward with the information available. Ann Weaver and Tabitha Stadler were suggested as possible support for the survey analysis and report. In follow-up to this recommendation, both individuals are too heavily committed on other projects to support this activity at this time. They made additional suggestions for potential contacts.

Lee Yokel would continue to source someone to help with the survey analysis and well as generate a list of respondents. Richard Gonzales will work with a small group of people to review the initial results of the survey.

### **UUP Gulf Alliance Project**

An introduction and overview was provided to the Gulf Alliance Project (formerly known as the Gulf of Mexico Ocean Literacy Project) currently funded by EPA's Gulf of Mexico Program. Three partners are involved: FL Dept. of Environmental Protection, Texas State Aquarium, and Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium. The program is a hybrid in that it involves working with middle school formal education through non-formal locations and educators.

The three existing programs have some similarities which include all are field based outdoor programs that involve inquiry based science education on coastal issues. Between the three sites they are making modifications to their existing programs and agreeing on certain strategies to use at three sites. These strategies will be examined and evaluated for their effectiveness.

The project is addressing UUPs at different levels. *Organizationally* they are focusing more on the audience and their community. This involves take home questions where students interview parents and then the program content is made relevant to student's values as well as other indicators. A predetermined procedure was established for *audience selection*. This identified a number of factors including student attendance, grades, and school average income. The *program content* is developed based on teacher-identified priorities as well as relating to initial survey responses from students for locally relevant issues.

*Delivery* of the material content involves two things – multiple inquiry-based outdoor hands-on activities, and a special focus on observation and inference. *Assessment* will involve reflection and communication after each experience. What did the students learn and remember from the program? Students will do a presentation at the end of the course. *Project evaluation* will involve a teacher/student survey and the project will also monitor a number of parameters such as grades and absenteeism.

At the conclusion of the pilot the results can be disseminated so that other organizations may benefit from them. There will also be presentations in different formats to professional organizations. It was noted that the name of the program was changed specifically to the "Gulf Alliance Project" as it specifically addresses the action within the *Governors' Action Plan*. There was one suggestion of perhaps allowing the students to communicate with each other in the various schools so they can share with their peers their experiences.

### **Publication**

New NOAA Publication \*Synthesis of Education Programs, Scholarship, Loan, and Internship Opportunities Available to Assist in Increasing the Number of Minorities Working in Fisheries and Marine Sciences <<http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/publications/ProgramsinScience.pdf>>\* (2007, NCCOS Technical Memorandum NOS NCCOS 53) is now available online. The publication is slow to load but is a description of some existing programs.

In follow-up to this announcement, Lee Yokel has downloaded the document and it can be emailed to those that request it.

### **Re-examination of the Goal**

From the *Governors' Action Plan* "Develop and host a pilot program to engage underrepresented and underserved communities in Gulf stewardship activities related to the Alliance strategic priorities."

A discussion was held with the group to discuss what they would like to get from the continued meetings and how to stay focused. The GOMA goal is really directly related to our committee and is the reason for its formation. The group was encouraged to stay focused on this goal as too much expression into other areas could dilute our efforts. There can be others ways to bring the group's expertise to other priority areas but we need to see how we can contribute to this specific goal. Good examples are pilot projects that are starting.

Further discussion included how utilization of the GOMA logo or a slogan with some existing programs could be beneficial. The working partnership helps us get hands on connections to the gulf market. Using this as a recognition tool could be beneficial to GOMA well as its partners.

Suggested ways to note the Alliance are:

1. Noting the Alliance for upcoming grant cycle – an evaluation criteria in applications for funding
2. Use a check list before assigning it as an Alliance project
3. Use the logo, web link, or a standard statement such as "meeting the goals of GOMA" or "I support the Gulf of Mexico Alliance" on materials and websites
4. Put out a call just within the UUP to see who fits and if a logo could be placed as an example of where partnership may lie
5. Each of us on the call can have the Alliance logo or statement supporting the Alliance

### **Assignments & Other Topics**

Additional discussions on the call noted that NOAA now has an Office of Education. This information is slow to be circulated to various organizations. Richard Gonzales with the Gulf of Mexico Foundation offered to begin a media blitz and invite Louisa Koch to visit the Science and Spanish Club Network. National Estuaries Day was suggested as a good time to do this in September.

Bryan Fluech is beginning to reach out to the Southwest Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. He had a good initial meeting with them and hopes to start targeting some Hispanic media outlets. He posed the question, "What messages to get out?" In follow-up to this, there are a number of messaging efforts that are about to take off. These could be used to supplement materials Bryan is using. It was also noted that working with business leaders at the meeting will help make better connections in the community.

The Leave No Trace.org website was mentioned. Jennifer Buchanan with the Grand Bay NERR is hosting workshops related to this activity.

Kris Shipman noted that Children and Nature Network (related to the book, “Last Child in the Woods”) is getting involved at the state level. They will be having a \$20m grants program. She offered to investigate this opportunity and report back on it at the next call.

### **Call Schedule**

The call scheduled was established for the first Tuesday of the first full week of the month. The next call will be:

Tuesday, September 4, 2007 at 10:00 AM CDT or 11:00 AM EDT

Tuesday, October 2, 2007

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Tuesday, December 4, 2007

**Goal – “Develop and host a pilot program to engage underrepresented and underserved communities in Gulf stewardship activities related to the Alliance strategic priorities.”**